## 置RUTGERS REVIEW

**RUTGERS UNITED AGAINST TUITION HIKES** 

**SURVIVAL GUIDE: RUTGERSFEST** 

**ROCKING A PRINCETON EATING CLUB** 

TO BFA OR NOT TO BFA?

March | April 2011 Volume 41 Issue 2

#### letter from the editor

Dear Faithful Reader,

As April winds and showers inspire nature with their sweet breathe, and as New Brunswick thaws from its difficult winter, The Rutgers Review emerges, like the flowers: new, fresh, colorful. At The Rutgers Review, we've done some soul searching. As a group, we've tried to find our voice, no longer content to be the "alternative magazine" that we've been in years past. Instead, we sought to offer something new and exciting. Creating this identity has been our big project, and this issue encapsulates what we've become: the voice of a student.

From a discussion of BFAs and MFAs, to a defense for Facebook, to a nostaligic look at the New Brunswick basement show scene (or lack there of...) the articles in this issue attempt to capture what its really like to be a student at Rutgers, straddling the middle ground between seriousness and humor.

Please, come join us in this celebration of college life, after all, you only get one shot at it. I invite you to send us feedback. Shoot us and email. Write us a letter. Message us on Facebook. Comment on our Tumblr. Or just come to a meeting and say hi.

Sincerely. Rob Gulya Editor-in-Chief



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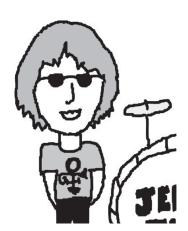
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#### Facebook, Like It.

by Amanda Matteo

our witty status just got ten "likes" in fifteen minutes. Your new profile picture got five flattering comments in thirty. And simultaneously, as more and more notification signals pop up on the side of your screen, your sense of selfconfidence and self-worth increases along with the number. It seems pathetic that anyone could rely so much on a social networking site for positive reinforcement, but in a generation run by Facebook, you can't really expect anything less. But rather than launch into some long-winded rant about how Facebook is destroying our minds and poisoning our friendships, I'm going to instead take this time to praise the site for actually preparing us for the real world. Too many people waste their time complaining about how technologically-dependent we are, especially concerning social networking. It's time to just accept it and appreciate its benefits for all they are worth.

Life is always a popularity contest. Whether you like it or not, you are always being judged and analyzed, and the impressions people have of you truly do matter. Of course, it's most important to be yourself and to act based on what you think is best; however, I think it is safe to say that never caring about what others think is an impossible, and senseless, feat. To get what you want out of life, it is necessary to put yourself out there and, as displeasing as it may sound, you need to please people along the way.

Now I am not in any way saying that a status with

obscure song lyrics is as important as, say, a job interview, but I do believe that our Facebook-focused mentality can apply to both situations. We focus on "likes" and comments and wall posts, or, more generally, a sense of acceptance and appreciation for what we do and say. I will openly admit to changing statuses multiple times in a row in an attempt to please the most friends and, in return, get the satisfaction of that little red blinking notification. At face value, that seems shallow and ridiculous (and maybe it is), but if applied to a broader context, maybe our preoccupation with feeling "popular" isn't such a bad thing. If you go out into the world with the understanding that sometimes you need to suck it up and tell people what they want to hear in order to get what you want out of life, then that oh-so-important job interview is going to be a thousand times more successful. Or, sticking with the metaphor, those fifty-two satisfying notifications are going to flood your newsfeed instantly.

Coming from a self-proclaimed Facebook addict, this may seem like a biased justification of why my procrastination method really isn't so bad (I swear, it isn't, I promise!). But in actuality, I think it's about time that we all just get with the program. We are a generation run by technology, and rather than run from it, we should appreciate and grow from the lessons it can teach us. Facebook is not just a social networking site; it is a fundamental part of our everyday lives. So keep updating those statuses and posing for that perfect profile picture, because, day by day, it's preparing you for the real world. Kudos to you, Mark Zuckerberg. If I get that new job, you'll be the first person I thank.

You may even know people on it, but do you understand it? Student government at Rutgers— it's amazing that this university prides itself on getting its students to "get involved," yet very few people even know what student government does. Hell, I'm on my dorm's hall government, and most of what Rutgers student government does remained a mystery to me before writing this article. That is why I decided to review the constitution of the Rutgers University Student Assembly (RUSA) to learn what it's all about.

The most obvious question, of course, is what does RUSA do? According to the first section of the constitution, the purpose of RUSA is to serve as the liaison to local and state government. Essentially, if concerned parties at the university have any issues that need to be presented to the government, they go through RUSA.

So now we know what RUSA does, but how does it work? Well, it works very similarly to how the US government does. This is of course through the making and executing of laws. The making is done, very appropriately, by a legislative branch, made up of Senators and representatives from various interest groups at Rutgers. The executing is done by an executive board, made up of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary and Recording Secretary.

RUSA is also made up of a number of committees. The most important ones are called the core committees, as these were the ones initially created by the JUST LIKE WITH OUR OWN
RUSA constitution. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT,
These consist of
the committees of
Academic Affairs, THOSE SERVING IN RUSA.
Legislative Affairs,

University Affairs and Public Relations. The constitution also leaves room for the creation of other committees as well.

What many people probably do not realize is that, just like with our own federal government, there is room to impeach those serving in RUSA. This is done through an investigation by the Internal Affairs committee, and, if it approves, a hearing is held. During the hearing, the impeached member has the opportunity to make his case, with a two-thirds majority needed to remove him from office.

RUSA is also made up of its Allocations Board, which, to many students, is the most important part. This is because the Allocations Board is the group that decides which student organizations get money and how much money they get. So that medieval weaponry club and Yankee's Stadium fan club you love so much wouldn't be around if it weren't for RUSA allocations.

As you can see, RUSA is a pretty cool organization that has a great effect on all Rutgers students, even if its constitution is full of a lot of big words and legal jargon. My only suggestion: make it easier for students to learn about and understand it because only so many people are actually going to waste their free time reading RUSA's constitution like I did!



unch time: the Douglass Campus Center. Location: the tables surrounding the central staircase where organizations hold bake sales. Sitting next to me is a girl enjoying a lunch of Panera Bread take-out. She swirls her green tea; I can imagine the taste. She uncaps her soup. She blows on it; it's still hot. She's taking her time, savoring this meal and this moment. She produces some of Panera's famous bread and dips it in the soup. Ah, the bread is multigrain. Divine.

I am essentially stalking her because I envy her; she has access to a meal that is not just the raw materials to fuel her day, but is also delicious. Food is important. Anything accessible outside of a dining hall is appreciated because the dining hall is not always an accessible choice.

For those of us who have neither cars to go off campus nor the time and energy necessary to endure the schlep across campus to Neilson Dining Hall and are bound to one side of the Cook/Douglass campus in that crucial moment when our hunger is rising and blood sugar dropping, the choices are limited to two: spend your hard-earned dollars at Mabel's for some chips or an energy bar, or try to exchange your meal swipes for some fresh food at the Douglass Café, also known simply as the DCC. Being on a collegiate budget inclines most people to head for the DCC. The mentality behind a meal swipe is that for the most part we're not paying for it: mom and dad, student loans or Rutgers are paying. When you are starving, you don't choose the DCC because you think it has a fun atmosphere, friendly service, or delicious food; you are choosing the DCC because you have no other choice. It's either eat there, don't eat at all, or Mabel's, which can be an issue if you are paying cash every day and not making full use of a meal plan. The DCC sometimes is not a "choice" at all.

More often than not, though, we "choose" to eat there. And more often than not, we are dissatisfied. The DCC as a part of RU Dining has an obligation to the students who frequent it to be affordable, varied, and at least satisfactory—it has no reason not to aspire to be the best. Especially at such a huge university, in terms of both campus size and population, it is necessary to decentralize the dining services so that more students can eat at more places and more

frequently.

Everybody has their own stories about the DCC, both good and bad. It has become a commonly-held belief that the DCC has bad food, and that is that. Anything good that

IT HAS BECOME A COMMONLY-HELD **BELIEF THAT THE** DCC HAS BAD FOOD, AND THAT IS THAT.

comes out of the DCC is perceived to have done so against all odds. Good food does come out of the DCC, but it cannot afford to have a bad reputation. When tour guides and orientation leaders tell prospective students that the food here at Rutgers is good, the bad reputations of certain establishments might taint that statement with a tinge of doubt, which can only be expressed by naming names in the most tactfully-honest manner possible. Ideally, there would be no doubts at all in the statement "The food here at Rutgers is good."

The DCC has been making efforts to change. As a regular customer, I am in a position to notice every little change. I see lists for inventory and procedures posted on the doors of the refrigerators, indicating a new method of training the staff. This could be furthered by providing staff with food safety and hygiene training, which should be required by all employees at food service establishments. There have also been more vegetarian options; of course, these options I started seeing early last semester, and have now become just as much a part of the exhausted daily selection as the Buffalo Chicken Salad, the Greek Salad, and so forth; the list runs on and on, and I can recite most of it from memory. Limited choices necessitate variety, especially when the DCC's patrons sometimes dine there as often as every day. At the same time, special populations must be considered, such as vegetarians and vegans. As a vegetarian, my DCC options are immediately narrowed down to about a quarter of what they offer. I can only imagine that vegans would be worse off in their efforts to find a balanced, satisfying DCC meal.

Trying to change means that there is some awareness of things that are lacking, but I encourage the DCC to try even more. During these times of renewal and revision at the university, now is the time to turn over a new leaf and become the revered establishment the DCC needs to be.





Alarm goes off at 8:00 AM, hit snooze, 8:05 AM, hit snooze, 8:10 AM, and so forth. I roll out of bed, put on my most comfortable clothes, and set off for Levin Theatre at a brisk pace. After three hours of being watched, and watching others, a brief siesta for lunch. Usually I eat over my anthology of plays, reading up for a quiz, then off to Theatre History. We started last September in Greece and Rome, and now we're into surrealism, expressionism, and dada. After an hour and twenty minutes of ardent listening, I catch a REXL to be swooped around Passion Puddle and back to College Hall for my next class, Gender, Culture, and Representation. I might major in Women's and Gender Studies, or I might not need this class at all, just like I didn't need Nature of Politics or Intro to Human Ecology. As a Theatre Arts major in the BA program, I have access to both a wide survey of theatrical topics as well as the full range of subjects that Rutgers has to offer. I am not required to do theatre all day every day—though I do so anyway through student-run theatre groups. But what of the other side—what if my art was everything to my schedule and my curriculum, graded, for credit, and the basis of my degree? How would my everyday life change, if at all?" - Melissa

"My life has changed since becoming a BFA. I mostly think about art. On the bus I think about my paintings. When I am roaming on the internet, I look up bios of contemporary artists and view their available work online. Painting after painting, flipping through the images. I don't feel guilty about wasting time because this is part of your work as an art student.

The best part about being a BFA is that you can not sleep for days and "live" in the studios to finish projects without being worried about papers to write or other classes because as a BFA student, art comes Yes, it is beneficial and a requirement to take other classes, but the real workload of a BFA in Visual Arts is homework outside of class. When final projects were assigned last semester, I could not avoid living at Mason Gross. I felt a real sense of displacement when I went home on winter break after a week-and-a-half of intensive work.

Being a BFA allows me to become completely submerged in my work. So when choosing between being a BFA versus BA, or neither, think about whether or not you are ready to make your art form your life. I chose to do a BFA in art rather than dance because as an "artist" I can work with dance and really anything ever. When your work has narrative or meaning, artists are not limited to any certain materials." - Mimi

Melissa Gabilanes is a BA in Theatre Arts with a double major in History enrolled in the School of Arts and Sciences. Mimi Gabriel is a BFA in Visual Arts with a BA major in Dance, enrolled in Mason Gross School of the Arts.



#### Stories from the Studio: Comparing BA and BFA Students



#### **ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT**



"I feel the difference [between the BA and BFA programs] is that the BFA is more rigorous and concentrated on a singular practice, where the BA is less concentrated on a single art form and more take-what-you-wish." — Rory Rosenberg, BFA in Visual Arts

"In a BFA program, you are able to learn through both classes and through performance, which is just as important as any class, if not more so. In a BA program, you only take classes and have very few opportunities to actually apply what you have learned into

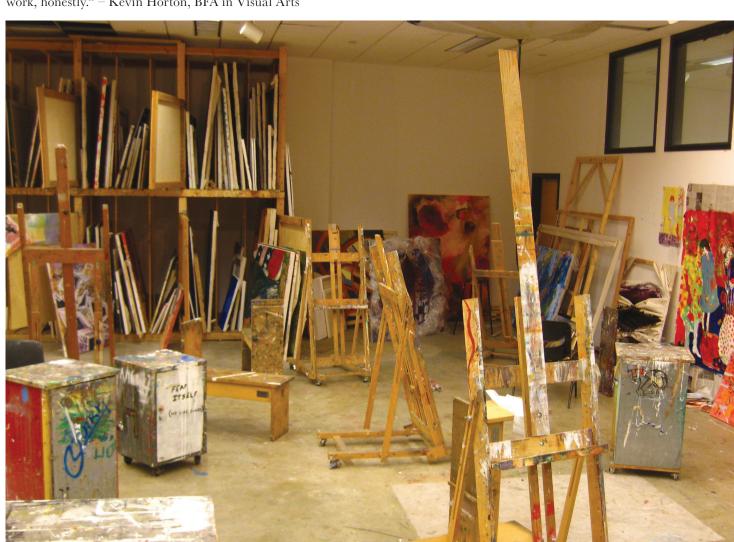
a proper scenario." - Jordan Gochman, BA in Theatre Arts

"BAs get a less comprehensive or concentrated art education but they get one with a really broad scope. It really all depends on where your passions truly lie and how hard you work, honestly." – Kevin Horton, BFA in Visual Arts

"I'm attempting a minor in English. I was told it's difficult for Mason Grossers to complete one because we have so much required studio time... and it's proving somewhat true, but I'd still love to continue my English classes next semester. Freshman year, I was thrilled to have nothing but art classes, but I started feeling a little dumb without knowledge coming in from some other place. I think it's important to get exposure to the outside world and other disciplines." – Irene Geller, BFA in Visual Arts

"The main difference is the fact that quite frankly, I don't do as much work as the BMs do. They focus on the performance aspect of music, while I take a back seat look at the structure of theory and history of it all. ...Originally, I was going to minor in music, but a counselor told me to take up the BA, which offered me major-level classes without the major-level intensity of the major. This way, I could still major in my two passions, while still being able to graduate on time. So far, it looks like it's going to all work out in the end." — Thomas Young, BA in Music

While Rutgers is what you make of it, studying your art at Mason Gross School of the Arts truly is what you make of it. We're only two swatches in a diverse catalog of patterns and colors, with two distinct experiences to share.



#### A Field Analysis of Unauthorized Artwork in Public Lavatories

by Eric Weinstein



Restrooms. As an art history minor and a connoisseur of restrooms, I feel I can effectively describe to you several respectable compositions I have found in the bathrooms here at the university.

#### Self-Portrait of the Artist, Marker, Art Library

In this contour, the artist creates his own outline in the reflective red finish of the stall door. The loose form gives shape to a calm figure. The left arm is incomplete, suggesting the artist's inability to recreate his own drawing hand and drawing tool. The piece is life scale; the figure's pants remain wrapped around the ankles. Theoretically, this piece is disturbing because it questions the observer's privacy in the bathroom stall. The viewer is left with the ghostly image of the artist: an individual who always precedes you.

#### Staring Man, Spray paint and stencil, Scott Hall

In the darkest bathroom stall of the men's room near the lecture hall, this face greets you above the toilet seat. Staring Man was made using a stencil technique. Stencil is popular for its efficiency and speed. The artist had no difficulty creating this eerie portrait of a bearded man, which materializes on the dirty, black-and-white splotched wall. The man's pupils gaze upon the head of the viewer from behind. Like *Self-Portrait of the Artist*, this piece questions one's privacy. But unlike the anonymous silhouette presented in the *Self-Portrait*, *Staring Man* is threatening and a reason I never use the bathrooms in Scott Hall.

#### Slayer Sticker, Sticker, Rutgers Student Center

One of the worst restrooms on campus is the food court men's restroom in the Rutgers Student Center. Both grungy and crowded, it is the perfect location for *Slayer Sticker*. As an amusing parody of the familiar warning for restaurant employees, the sticker calls attention to the gross condition of the restroom. Its reference to the American thrash-metal band and the act of mutilation projects the viewer's imagination into a seedier realm. However, considering you are already in the Rutgers Student Center men's restroom, transfiguration is unnecessary. Another feature of the stall is a crudely carved "glory hole."



Employees must carve "Slayer" into forearms before returning to work.

**ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT** 



There is something special about junk. People can relate to it. What everyday materialistic American doesn't own things that inevitably pile up or wear out at some point? My quarters at Rutgers are filled with all sorts of useless objects that either should be put to use or discarded.

I'm not a hoarder; in fact, I dislike clutter, but it isn't bad enough for me to care. I'm mature about my junk, though, and if push did come to shove, I would do what needs to be done in cleaning it up and do it properly, sorting it and such. There are worst-case scenarios, however, for some who are not mature about their junk, as illustrated by two fantastic shows on the A&E Network. These shows are Storage Wars and Hoarders, both of which show the viewer what can happen if he lets his junk get the better of him.

In Storage Wars, thrift-store owners and independent purchasers bid on abandoned storage lockers. These gigantic containers are filled to the brim with junk, but they also hide forgotten valuables. The participants in the show usually profit off of these lockers' contents, sometimes handsomely. They sift through unsorted stacks looking for scattered pieces of non-junk, diamonds in the rough. Sometimes there are literal diamonds; one protagonist found a jewelry stash. Sometimes the rewards are more immediate, however; another protagonist found cash stuffed in the back of an old painting. The audience of Storage Wars is only exposed to the smirking profiteers, but the underlying reality is one of victims, the everyday people who are forced to indiscriminately stuff their things in a storage unit they cannot afford. The show is

#### **Television Junk Woes**

by Edward Reep

compelling because it treats the process as a hunt for treasure, a classic yet novel idea, made even more interesting by the treasure's unhappy origins.

On the other hand, *Hoarders* spotlights individuals who accumulate excessive amounts of junk; their homes are barely livable and sometimes dangerous. The show funds experts to intervene in these dire situations, and often provides people with psychological help in addition to professional-grade cleaning efforts. Most people with cluttered homes are nowhere near as crazy nor have homes nearly as bad as the individuals spotlighted in this show. In one episode, the featured man had the demeanor and dress of a bum and might as well have just been living in a junkyard. Nonetheless, part of the appeal and horror is that the show's subjects exhibit a common human behavior, hoarding, taken to the extreme. The viewer realizes he is not as different from these lunatics as he thinks.

There is an important lesson in these two programs: dispose of junk when it gets out of hand, but do so carefully, and keep track of your valuables. These shows tell us about ourselves. Human beings love things, maybe too much, but we do not necessarily respect things. If we respected things, we would treat them better more often and have nice houses like all those families that aren't mine. Let's all treat our stuff better. It doesn't deserve to get thrown out in a mass-cleaning effort or end up in the hands of a low-end thrift-store.

#### **ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT**



o you dream in black and white? Although David B portrays his reveries in a purple monochrome, his dreams are far from simple. Savage wars, taxis filled with animals, and a variety of monsters weave together into a single collection of nineteen dreams collected over the span of fifteen years.

David B, a French graphic novelist, is best known for Epileptic, an autobiography of life with a sibling suffering from epilepsy. As a child, B was fascinated with war imagery and the history of battle. Nocturnal Conspiracies: Nineteen Dreams illustrates that this fixation has carried into his adult life and into his subconscious.

The world behind B's closed eyes is one that reflects the turbulence and poverty of our own. Left alone in the rows of clean-edged illustrations, the reader could quickly become lost in images of firing guns, hanged soldiers, and decaying corpses. B's narration, however, guides the scenes in a way that neutralizes this fear. His tone reminds the reader that these are, after all, dreams; he exhibits no sign of nightmarish unease and suggests that the reader too should not be afraid.

Just as B guides the plots effectively with his narrative tone, he paces the plots effectively with wordless panels. The panels progress organically as a stream of subconscious thoughts, pausing silently to invite accompanying emotions. When reflecting on one's own dreams, it is often difficult to verbally communicate the emotional and physical sensations. One recalls waking suddenly in a cold sweat with the image of the barrel of a gun or a great void still vivid in the mind. B captures this visual aspect of dreams, leaving the reader to observe the events and viscerally experience the accompanying anxiety.

Though B's narration is effective in its simple, descriptive quality, the content of the panels is captivatingly intricate. While maintaining a cartoon-like artistic style, B creates detailed drawings of the men, animals, armies, and cities that populate his dreams.



The layout of each is dynamic and reveals artistic deliberation. Those with an interest in comic art would enjoy the high quality of B's work, which takes a step away from the strictly black-and-white drawings of Epileptic to shades of purple. This artistic choice gives the panels a finished, realistic look that represents the best of what the comic art style can offer as an art form.

For those interested in dream analysis, this book is full of opportunities. Dreams with names like "The Eye" and "The Windows" begin with simple images that gain significance throughout the plot. His use of iconic images to represent these objects provides an interpretation of these images as metaphors. It is at times difficult not to analyze the stream of subconscious and to attempt to make sense of the actions that occur. To engage in this analysis is often to recall one's own dreams and to draw parallels between personal experiences and the ones B recounts.

The format of Nineteen Dreams is ideal for those who find themselves continually rotating between numerous books at one time. Though it can by all means be read in one sitting, Nineteen Dreams follows the traditional principles of reading a graphic narrative; it can be read in one sitting, but much of the

#### **NOCTURNAL CONSPIRACIES**

review and illustrations by Jess Cain



Images created by Jess Cain, based on images in David B.'s Nocturnal Conspiracies.



'reading' depends on the processing and appreciation of the panels. The text of the collection amounts to nine hundred or so words, which can be read easily in a short span of time. Depending on the reader's interest in art, it could take just as short a span of time to skim over the drawings to understand the basic plot of the dreams.

While B's dream recollections are dense and thought-provoking, they are, essentially, dreams. As such, they end abruptly and inconclusively, lacking the coherence found in other forms of writing. This asks the question, are unedited, pure dreams the proper material for stories? Though his dreams are detailed and intricately recorded, B doesn't communicate an overarching intention or pattern in his work. B's collection seems to say that dreams are simply dreams, and that those who need to make connections to enjoy a story are welcome to do so.

# NEW JERSEY STUDENTS UNITE AGAINST THE BUDGET



#### THE PROBLEM

t costs the same amount of money to support one person in jail for a year as it would to pay room and board for two Rutgers University students. Sitting in a crowded student center, this was when Matt Cordeiro, the vice president of the Rutgers Student Union, caught my attention.

The Rutgers Student Union, a branch off of RUSA, has been lobbying for the past two years to keep college affordable. Prices have skyrocketed over the past decade. The average tuition for a public four-year college has eclipsed \$26,000 (up 4.4 percent from last year). Rutgers tuition has nearly doubled in the past decade from \$5,250 in 2000 to \$9,926 for next year, with a yearly increase of anywhere between 7.3 and 9.8 percent. Likewise, the College of New Jersey and Rider saw a 4.1 and 4.9 percent increase last year, respectively. In an effort to curb tuition costs, Governor Christie imposed a tuition increase gap of 4 percent, but a budget cut of \$173 million forced universities into an awkward position. The result: faculty lay-offs and a sharp increase in the number of students admitted and, thus, a shortage of available housing and a larger class size. Under the new budget, the Thomas Edison State College would be forced to merge with Rutgers, two schools with "two missions [that] are frankly not compatible," according to George Pruitt, the president of Thomas Edison. Meanwhile, Christie has called for \$200 million in tax breaks, including an increase in tax-exemptions from \$1 million to \$6.76 million, for businesses, declaring it will provide a boost for small businesses. The estate tax exemption will increase to \$1 million.



Matt Cordeiro helps lead the effort to stop further tuition hikes at the university.

got tuition?

#### **FEATURE**

Where does state money go? Why is the government more concerned about businesses than college students? How can we stop budget cuts and, in turn, tuition hikes? These are answers Rutgers United is out to solve.

After the unification of four colleges into the School of Arts and Sciences, the Rutgers University Student Assembly unified as well. That leaves one RUSA for all of the nearly 40,000 undergraduates enrolled on the New Brunswick campus. Moreover, because of the voting system, which was done by small, closed-door voting groups, candidates for executive positions only had to cater to and convince a small, at times unrepresentative, voting population. According to Cordeiro, who was on the Assembly when the unification took effect and the current constitution was drafted, this leads to a lack of student accountability and a poor representation of the student body.

It was not until the 2009-2010 academic year that a new constitution was drafted for the Student Assembly. Under the new system, executive officers are directly elected by class year and campus.

#### TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION

Summer 2010 saw the formation of Rutgers United as another branch under RUSA. In the inaugural election, Rutgers United ran an impressive campaign that captured 30 of 31 available seats. The organization targeted three main issues: the environment (some might remember the Take Back

the Tap crusade, in which Rutgers United sold reusable water bottles for a mere five dollars), tenants' rights (handbook to off-campus housing and legal advising) and higher education. As of late, with the increasingly dire situation concerning higher education, the latter has moved to the forefront, and Rutgers has taken the lead in a state-wide movement to improve the accessibility of higher education.

In order to wield more political power, Rutgers United has teamed up with several other universities throughout New Jersey, including TCNJ, Rider, Rowan, Kean and NJIT. First, Rutgers United, under the supervision of Cordeiro and John Aspray, had to stir movement within RUSA, forming a joint committee that created university profiles of all NJ schools and decided how to start contacting them. Beginning with all New Jersey four-year public universities, Aspray organized volunteers who sent countless emails and made countless phone calls before sending delegations to six schools. Eventually, nine schools responded.

On February 5, 2011, the nine four-year public colleges in New Jersey met at Rutgers for a Statewide Summit to form a statewide student assembly (NJ United Students), creating what Cordeiro referred to as "a network of really talented individuals working together." Delegates from each school exchanged contacts and outlined the structure of NJUS. Each University has its strengths, Cordeiro explained: TCNJ is near Trenton, giving them more influence in the capital, while Rutgers, because of its central location and easy access to public transportation, has been an important meeting and



organizing hot-spot. Individually, each University would have to struggle to overcome its drawbacks and would have to compete with one another for the attention of legislators and state executives. As a group, they can combine their energies, their funds, and their expertise.

The statewide Student Union is still a work in progress. Aspray and other representatives have been in contact with the United States Student Assembly as well as other statewide assemblies. "We have high hopes," explains an enthusiastic Aspray, "and we want to learn." Although the Union has already made a name for itself in the political foray, there is still room for growth and improvement.

#### JAIL OR COLLEGE?

On March 16, 2011, New Jersey United Students sent three representatives to the NJ State Budget Meeting, pushing hard for increased funding for higher education, which has been declining for the past two decades, and hoping to establish themselves on the political radar as the voice of the students.

Governor Christie's new budget, in addition to tax exemptions for the rich and for businesses, cuts fringe benefits for government employees, including health-care and paid vacation days, and money for the maintenance of government facilities. The budget also cuts funding for higher education, an area in which New Jersey already ranks 50th in the nation. The New Jersey Tuition Aid Grant (TAG), a need-based grant to help needy students pay for college, will see a 8.7% decrease, and, as stated in the state-budget, "for fiscal 2011, anticipated growth in the program will not be funded." Moreover, the state has completely cut NJSTARS, a merit-based scholarship.

What can students do to stop this?

Rutgers United has two major programs on the agenda for spring 2011. On April 13, there will be a student-coordinated, statewide Day of Action throughout New Jersey. At Rutgers, the day will consist of a rally in Voorhees Mall, giving students a chance to express their opinions and reach out to others. Students will be able to contact their legislatures and share their stories in a video to be aired on YouTube. The day will be dedicated to formulating a coherent student voice and getting young people involved in the political process.

In addition, in April, Rutgers United will be launching the "Save Education" campaign at Tent State, aiming to inform students about the increasingly problematic situation facing higher education as well as register students to vote and provide them with the information needed to contact their legislatures. Both events will aim at gathering support and informing the student body about Rutgers United and its attempt to make higher education accessible. Moreover, it will allow students a chance to become active members of the national political scene, which Cordeiro described as "alienating" to young people.

When confronting legislators, Aspray has found, on the whole, a positive reaction and respect for organized student



above: Tim Cobb orates his position at the Tution Monologues, March 30 left: John Aspray looks over a meeting of The Rutgers Student United

groups. They then, however, explain that New Jersey is in a "budget crisis" and are non-committal about funding higher education. When asked about how, specifically, to fund higher education, Apray offers creative, refreshing ideas (a professional tax for legal and medical services or the allocation of "vice taxes" from tobacco and casinos to fund university facilities) but is met with skepticism and disdain by democratic legislators. "This is a budget that spares no one but the wealthy," Assembly Budget Committee Chairman Louis Greenwald, D-Camden, complained.

There is undeniably a financial crisis, not only in New Jersey, but throughout the country. This makes it even more imperative that we spend the money we have wisely and responsibly. Voice of America, an organization providing college education for inmates, has reported that over 90% of incarcerated criminals do not have a college degree, and that 90% of those who receive one during their imprisonment do not return to crime. The 2011 New Jersey Budget provides direct state money in the amount of \$950, 970 to the Department of Corrections and \$520, 908 to Law and Public Safety.

\$64, 923 is given to the Department of Education.



the whateverhood

a roadtrip and concert review
by Lizzie Plaugic
photos by Eric Weinstein

top to bottom: jazz at the the looking glass lake, lizzie plays improvised pool, waiting at terrace club, princetonians gone wild

The plan is set: the five of us are leaving New Brunswick at 7:30. Eric's driving. First, we're going to the jazz show and then to Terrace Eating Club at Princeton U. to see NB basement royalty, Screaming Females and Nashville cool kids, JEFF the Brotherhood.

I'm excited. It's a pseudo road trip, it's an escape from the monotony of New Brunswick Saturday nights, it's free beer and sweet tunes.

At 8 o'clock we pull into a weird hidden driveway somewhere in Princeton. There's a swanky-looking white house in front of us with all the lights on and what appears to be a backyard full of silver sedans. I mention something about Nikes and Kool-Aid as we squeeze in between two cars.

This is The Looking Glass Lake. It's apparently a private residence - like a New Brunswick show house, but for aging WASPs. We're ten minutes late and the show has already started. We shuffle with uncertainty into what appears to be an extension added to the house for the sole purpose of hosting shows. It smells like the final days of construction and wet paint. On a low stage in the front of the room is the jazz trio (piano, upright bass, drums) we're here to see. We sit in the back and take turns slinking to the bathroom for a post-drive piss, giving off the impression that we're building a bomb piece-by-piece.

The elderly jazz fans are not pleased – we do not fit in. I rub my hand through my greasy hair and wish I had at least stuck it under the sink before we left New Brunswick. My muscle tee with deep arm-holes is revealing way too much side-boob and my pants are ripped at the knee, framing a week-old scab from a run-in with the sidewalk. At least I'm not wearing my backpack.

I'll be the first to admit I don't know much about jazz. But what I've pieced together from my various interactions with the genre is that all jazz musicians over the age of 25 wear fedoras and make "I'm-about-tocum" faces while they play. And then there's jazz humor, which I apparently don't understand at all. The bassist will say something about his fingers or some improv piece and everyone will give a hearty jazz chuckle. I look to Frank and attempt to raise one eyebrow.

"I think that man needs a smaller violin," he whis-

We endure it for an hour, get some free cheese and flee the house at halftime. Now it's time for Terrace. We've all been there before: the Princeton eating club full of snobby white kids in pea coats who just really dig indie buzz bands, man. We get there at 9:30, even though the show doesn't start til midnight. We're not

on the guest list, so we've gotta sneak in before the bouncers start guarding the door, turning away any riff-raff without an Ivy League ID. We go upstairs to the pool table room and act casual, avoiding eye contact with

WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE BEFORE: THE PRINCETON EATING CLUB FULL OF SNOBBY WHITE KIDS IN PEA COATS WHO JUST REALLY DIG INDIE BUZZ BANDS, MAN.

the Terrace members scattered around doing homework and smoking Cloves.

Time passes. Kegs are tapped. More New Brunswick kids show up. I attempt to control the music in the tap room for as long as possible. Finally, around 12:30, Screaming Females take the floor. The Screamales were, as usual, great – it was a fun live show and even the Princetonians managed to move their exam-worn bodies. Here's the part where I add the woulda-been-better-in-a-basement-blahblah-blah sentence. Honestly, I don't really wanna talk about Screaming Females - if you've never seen them live you should. Their shows still hold up after seeing them several times, which is more than I can say for some bands...

What I wanna talk about is JEFF the Brotherhood. "Oh, but JEFF's so great, so rockin', they're from Nashville, Jake's moustache is so fly," you say. Yes, I know. They're great. But really only great the first couple of times. Their set list has hit a plateau and they seem content with the fact that they can always bring down the house with "Bone Jam." Woo-oooo-oooooo... fuck you guys. Sorry, that was mean. But this show was shitty and stale and boring. Maybe JEFF is too cool to bother with impressing some Princeton squares - and they probably are – but they could at least use this time for a little musical experimentation. But of course, the crowd loved the "same old same old" anyway. Freeflowing beer helps, as does zombie-like, unwavering loyalty from certain New Brunswick folk. Two teethgrindingly pedantic quotes overheard during the JEFF

"I think I can only feel music when I'm drunk." "This is crazy! This is the first time I've moshed!"

I think that if all the Princetonians stopped listening to so much Vampire Weekend, they wouldn't be so enraptured by slightly-above-mediocre garage rock. And that's what JEFF the Brotherhood is. As lame as it sounds, I think they've got potential, but Jake, Jamin,

you gotta step up your game, dudes.

Really, I'm probably just bitter 'cause I missed Jacuzzi Boys for this shit.



## REBORI an interview with chiodos

by Sonia Karas

'm standing outside in what has now turned to dusk, casually chatting with a few security guards at Starland Ballroom, trying to pass a little time. I'm here to interview Chiodos before they kick off the Reckless and Relentless tour. Tonight's sold-out show speaks volumes about the resurrection of the band. Surely you've heard of them. They most likely evoke nostalgia from your middle school days, but these guys are here to stay and are still selling out venues.

Matt Goddard, Bradley Bell, and Jason Hale step aside from loading in to answer a few of my questions, quite graciously at that. This year is all about rebirth. With the addition of a new lead singer and a new album Illuminaudio out, these guys are redefining Chiodos as you know it.

Controversy has surrounded Chiodos in the past year; the band has faced changes that have reinvented them as a whole. "If we didn't make the decisions we had to, we wouldn't be here right now," says Matt. Upon the firing of Craig Owens, many fans turned a cold shoulder, believing that the band could never carry on without their front-man. Bradley weighed in on some misconceptions about the changes the band has made: "We just get a lot of criticism...when people don't really realize that when a number of people come together for one reason it's obvious that something was detrimental and needed to happen." Chiodos put out Illuminaudio last November, the first release with Brandon Bolmer leading the pack, and have proved that change is good, and fans are still yearning for more. However, it shouldn't come as a surprise to fans.

Entering their 10th year, Chiodos knows a thing or two about writing a solid record. "We're just trying to push ourselves to try new things and experiment," they say. What better time to experiment than during this essential period of rebuilding, which Jason humorously describes as "a fresh placenta"! On tour with metal-core juggernauts Asking

WITH THE ADDITION OF A NEW LEAD SINGER AND A NEW ALBUM ILLUMINAUDIO **OUT, THESE GUYS ARE** REDEFINING CHIODOS AS YOU KNOW IT.

Alexandria and Miss May I, Chiodos proves that it can't be confined to one arena. And isn't that exactly what a rebirth should be all about?

The hustle and bustle surrounding us begins to subside, as sound-check comes to an end, and all of the bands have staked their place behind the all-access gate. Matt takes another drag from his cigarette and we all brace against the cool breeze. It's the calm before the storm. Hundreds of kids line up, spiraling around the Starland grounds, excitedly waiting for tonight's show. Even with hundreds of shows under their belts, life on the road has yet to lose its majesty. "I want to do this for as long as it allows us to, for sure," says Bradley, who smiles at the thought.

Replacing Owens seems to have rejuvenated the guys, and reaffirmed the goals that are the driving force behind the band. Matt declares, "I don't have any plans of slowing down, [and] I think these guys all have the same mentality." What seemed to many as a potential end turned out to be exactly what the band needed. "We're all happy, super happy." And happy bandmates make an amazing album. I asked Bradley how he hopes Chiodos will be remembered, and his response was simple and straightforward: "Just awesome. Awesome musicians with steel livers."

■ ven before I applied to Rutgers Univer- tunately, by the time you sity as a high school senior, I had known • of New Brunswick's cast of alumni bands. To name a few: Thursday, Midtown; not to mention Lifetime and the Bouncing Souls. By the time I had arrived at Rutgers as a freshman in the fall of 2007, it seemed the basement scene was still thriving. There were a plethora of shows - there'd be at least four a week, more than I could even keep up with. There were shows thrown in basements at places like the Breadbox on Delafield, Death City on Baldwin Street, and America on Louis. Yet most of the bands I watched throughout college have broken up: Zhenia Golov, Seasick, Rapid Cities; none of them really made it anywhere in terms of popularity. These bands tended to be noisy, loud, fast, heavy... let's just say "not very accessible." But it wasn't just about this underground sound: the thing was, this was all happening on a very personal level. I mean, maybe I'm just fondly looking at my freshman naivete. After all, it was, above all else, a place to drink - but beyond that, it's an outlet, a social area where like-minded people meet.

Of course, like the bands, the houses dissolve as well: bands break up, people move out. There's a running joke among the kids around here: "Highland Park: where old punks go to burn out." I've also noticed the little stuff - there are barely any kids handing out flyers these days, I rarely hear anyone really backing a local band they really like. Putting together shows is harder, primarily because of cops, noise violations, and landlord complaints. Brian Goglia, bassist for They Had Faces Then tells me, "I remember a few months ago, my roommates and I put together a show in their backyard garage on Guilden Street... by the time nine o'clock rolled around, only one band had played and the cops had already shut it down. We were able to move it to our guitarist's basement on another street. Unfortunately, by the time we threw a second show there, we were already getting complaints from the neighbors because we couldn't keep the noise level confined to the basement."

In terms of more recent development, Frank De-Franco, Rutgers University student and Holy City Zoo guitarist, has been putting together basement shows since 2008. Recently, he started the Tiny Giant Artist Collective, a group of like-minded bands who have been playing shows together for the past year. Frank has been putting on shows at McCormick's for the past couple of months, a small dive bar on French Street. Every Thursday, you can enjoy a show comprised of local bands, completely free. All you pay for is what you drink, and of course a donation to the bands is always appreciated. It seems to be one of the few legitimate places where these local bands can play live shows without living in fear of the police. (Unfor-

read this, McCormick's will have shut down due to financial troubles.) Mc-Cormick's provides a small haven for bands because cops have made putting together shows a nightmare for promoters like Frank.

THERE ARE BARELY ANY KIDS HANDING OUT FLYERS THESE DAYS, I RARELY HEAR ANYONE REALLY BACKING A LOCAL BAND THEY REALLY LIKE.

It used to be a lot easier when cops were more lenient. "Nowadays, everybody's real nervous in fear of getting tackled with noise violation tickets."

So where does the future of the New Brunswick music scene lie? Dan Pelic, a promoter who used to put on shows in his basement on Baldwin Street, provides the worst case scenario: "Mark my words - there will be even more DJ/Dance Parties than the small amount of live music shows there are now. Music is so obnoxiously accessible and attention spans are getting so frighteningly short that people would rather do that than sit through live bands." Frank, on the other hand, is a little bit more optimistic. "Honestly, it's gonna go in one of two ways: it's either going to be done completely, or it's going to flourish more than it has in the past decade.

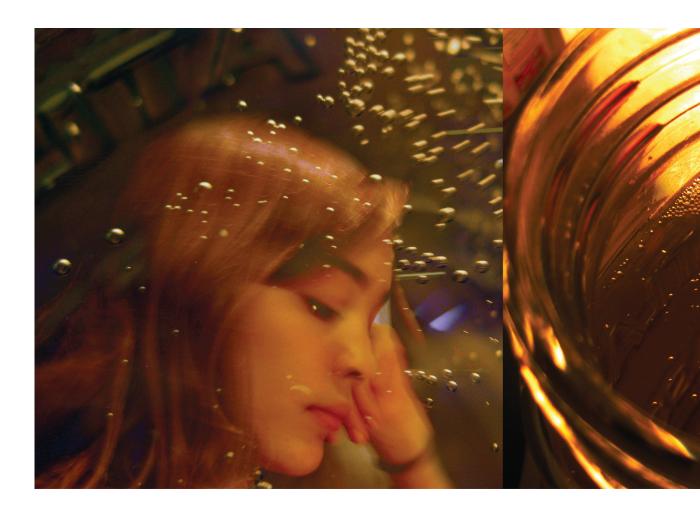
I'm looking at it positively, because, first of all, a big appeal to a lot of the students who come to Rutgers has always been the basement show scene - meeting other musicians is a big reason why kids come here in the first place. And when you look at the music itself, it's thriving right now; there's been a bunch of great releases I'm proud to say have come out of New Brunswick." It's true, the actual music continues to thrive. Bands like Big Eyes, Holy City Zoo, Brick Mower, They Had Faces Then, and County Drop comprise but a small portion of local bands making waves. And the optimism doesn't stop there - day by day, the digital age seems to be leveling the playing field. Whereas only major labels used to have the power of exposure, they are now suffering due to the spread and sprawl of the Internet. "With the Internet, anybody can put out music and expose it to people. But right now, there's too much of it and you have to sort through the bullshit and bad music - but a solid collective, where everything is quality, would provide people with instant access to good music."

But that's not to say it's impossible to put on basement shows in this town. Hopefully, even this year, as kids move out of New Brunswick due to graduation, there will continue to be an influx of idealistic people who want to keep this scene going. It seems that the basement show scene of New Brunswick needs to be looked upon as a tradition to be kept alive. As for Frank and the Tiny Giant Collective, he simply says, "We're not going away any time soon."

#### what's become of the local new brunswick scene by marcin wysocki



brian goglia (with mic), matt harvey, and ken de poto of they had faces then at a basement on duke street



### how to love a bartender

by matthew kosinski

ver a glass of something cheap, Nathan is bent sharply so that his spine is almost perpendicular to his pelvis. He broods.

"She's totally into me, man."

But is she? Yes, she's a lovely thing and her hair is a soft chain-link network of black ringlets falling, falling to cover her dream-white neck and exposed shoulders. She seems to only wear monochromatic or polka-dot dresses and her lips are always arterial red.

But we must remember – though Nathan either keeps forgetting or does not have it in him to remember, both options are equally viable – that she is a bartender, because no one really knows how to love a bartender. In small ways, it is like trying to love a prostitute, because of course she, the bartender, is always overtly friendly, of course she knows that the more she flirts with male customers, the longer they will stay and the more they will drink and they will leave much larger tips when last call sweeps, irrevocable, through the bar for the night.

I've noticed that she bends much lower and maintains the bent position for much longer when reaching into the cooler for bottom-shelf beers to serve men.

"I just know she is."

"She's a bartender, Nathan. Of course she's nice to us."
"No, it's more than that. I can feel it. She's into me."
Nathan watches her. She's wiping a dirty rag in circles



on the water-stained bar top.

"I have a plan," he says.

"Bullshit you have a plan."

Nathan never has a plan. He straightens up. He adjusts the lapels of his hand-me-down blazer. He stares at her, unflinching. It is slightly embarrassing. He keeps watching her, absorbed in the spectacle of her circular wiping motions and occasional banter with customers or the other bartender working with her.

And I have to admit that she is more than just a cute bartender, in all honesty. Given that she navigates nightly the same spatiotemporal terrain as we do, she's uncommonly pretty, borderline gorgeous, well worth the energy spent salivating over, even if nothing comes of it. I resolve to not stop Nathan from doing what he's so set on doing, mostly because she is uncommonly pretty but also partly because I have a feeling it will end up being fun to watch.

"Watch this."

He gets up and so do I, I watch this, and what a show it is. At the counter Nathan blatantly strikes his best approximation of the "I'm just here, casually waiting for you to serve me, please take your time, no rush, really, I'm an easy-going sort of upstanding gentleman," pose. It ends up looking more like the "holy shit I'm obviously incredibly self-aware at this very non-casual moment, and the longer you make me wait here the more I sweat and suc-

cumb to nervous tremors which I hope are imperceptible even though I know they cannot possibly go unnoticed" pose. She's at the other end of the bar, digging through the cooler's bottom shelf in one of her sweet, prolonged bends. The male bartender comes back from wherever the hell he was. He catches sight of Nathan standing there and wanting to order a drink. He asks Nathan, "What can I get for you?" or something along those lines and Nathan waves him away and probably tries to say something but doesn't actually say anything. The guy kind of looks at him, this bemused "what's up with this guy?" sort of look and proceeds to ask him why he's waving as if he wants nothing, when he's standing at the bar with an empty glass and a five dollar bill.

Then Nathan points. He points at her, and I don't even want to try to guess what he says, but he points right at her. The guy steps back and he starts laughing, really riotous holy-shit laughing. She turns to see what all the commotion is, naturally, and Nathan's poise, what little he had in the first place, is shot. He goes flaccid. His body is ungainly, immovable except in spastic bursts.

Now she's there too, looking confused, asking what's going on and the guy can't stop laughing, and Nathan is too proud to disappear. He stands his ground and tries to compose himself but that moment has passed. If we imagine Nathan's flirting abilities to be a gun, we can say that, at the outset, he had no chance of hitting the target, but now he's got it so that he's going to shoot himself four or five times in the foot before he realizes he's been hit. When the guy finally stops laughing and takes a couple deep breaths to make sure he's good and ready, he recounts to the beloved what happened. She – poor Nathan, I almost feel bad for him – she starts laughing, even louder and more convulsively than the guy, and this makes the guy start laughing too, again, and they're both laughing, and even though the jukebox is playing some really heavy music very loudly, the whole bar is looking at the bartenders and Nathan and wondering what the fuck is going on.

Pitifully, without a word, Nathan retreats.

"Let's go, man."

"Hold on, I'm not even done. Sit down and wait."

"Hurry up. I'll be outside, smoking."

He puts his coat on and he goes to leave.

He leaves, through the backdoor, because he does not want to have to walk past the bartenders again, who are still laughing, both of them, but at least now we know how to love a bartender.

You must love a bartender like so: you must love her from afar. You must care about her very deeply from across the room. You must only breach the interstitial space to order a drink, and even then you should only say thank you and smile extra wide when she serves your drink, regardless of whether or not she proffers a glass with the bottle or even whether or not she is the one to serve you, because you don't know what's going on in her head, maybe she's having an off-day, maybe she's terribly busy. You're not god. Take what you get. And if you cannot do these things, do not love a bartender.



#### angel berry trifle

1 package Instant Vanilla Pudding Mix (1 oz box)

½ cup sour cream

2 tsp vanilla extract

1 carton whipped topping (8 oz tub)

rainbow nonpareil-type sprinkles (my secret addition!)

- Leave aside 15 outer edge slices and all middle slices.
- sit for 2 minutes.
- 2) In large bowl, beat yogurt, cream cheese, sour cream and vanilla until smooth; fold this inside pudding mixture.

Place 1/3 cake cubes in 4-quart trifle bowl. Top with 1/3 pudding mixture, and push the mixture down to seep into the cake. Line outer edge of bowl with middle strawberry slices, placed vertically side-by-side against the glass. Add 1/3 berry mixture in a layer across the pudding, then slather 1/2 whipped topping across the berries.

3) Push layers down every time you add something new. Repeat layers once then top with remaining cake and final pudding layer. Decorate top with outer edge slices of strawberries, some blueberries, and rainbow sprinkles. Refrigerate for 4-8 hours, then serve and enjoy!

#### HOW TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKEYOU CAN BAKE

#### BY AMANDA MATTEO

So if you're anything like me, you can't cook or bake for shit. I'm the one who licks the spoon and stands there for "moral support" as my friends and family prepare food. But tired of being oh-so-pathetic, and wanting to impress my friends, I went on the search for something easy and impressive-looking to make as a surprise. The response was overwhelmingly positive, and my new "specialty" has been requested many times since. And now, esteemed Rutgers Review reader, I am going to share my fantastic secret recipe with you. Good luck, and get ready to impress!

So, fellow non-bakers out there, once you finish making this masterpiece just take a moment and bask in the glory of it all. You're now the life of the party, and can be sure to expect requests from your friends for "that trifle thing" for years to come.

# Some examples of sign:



# Rutgersfest Survival Guide by the Rutgers Review

## Important Information and tactics

Please distribute via email, print and phone only

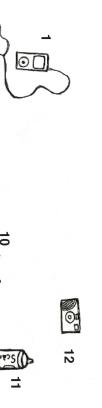
\*Twitter and facebook are being monitored, make sure this information doesn't get into the hands of police or security personnel.

## Items to bring

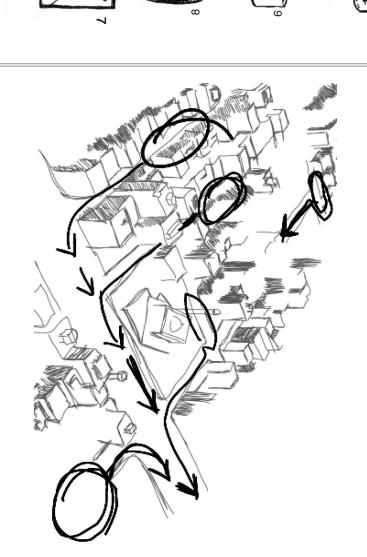
- The bands this year are 30Hi3 and Pitbull.

   Syon if you don't smake it's a
- Even if you don't smoke it's a good idea to have a pack on hand. If I had a nickel for every time someone asked me for a 'boag' last year I would have 35 cents.
- 3) See #2.
- 4) Comfortable shoes are a good idea. You may end up doing more dancing, stumbling and running than expected.
- An old sweatshirt is a must. It can be made into a travel pillow on the go.

- 6) Bring your not-very-smart phone You can throw it at old friends, new enemies or 30Hl3.
- Non-relevant (but very important) sign.
- 8) Chaser/mixer. Probably a Pepsi product.
- 9) FLASK 'O HOOCH.
- 10) See #13.
- 11) So you can reenact the intro from Fresh Prince of Bel-Air.
- Keyword: disposable.
- 13) Moist toilettes so you don't get caught with your hands dirty.



- Crowd together with friends and neighbors in residential streets far from the presence of security forces
- 2. Cheer in the name of Rutgers and the drunkenness of its people
- 3. Exit in groups into the primary streets to gather as large and drunk a crowd as possible
- 4. Sneak into important university buildings and occupy them



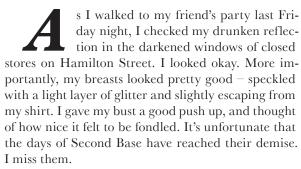
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TREE

#### ODE TO **SECOND** BASE

BY CURIOUS CAT



Just to be sure we're on the same page about this, let's define "second base" as everything waist up that does not involve genitalia. Feeling, fondling, maybe even kissing, whatever tickles your fancy.

Remember the good ol' days when Billy would take you the movies, put his arm around you and edge his hand closer to your chest? He wanted nothing more than to feel how soft your tits felt under your sweater. Man, we had it good then. I thought I was a real slut every time I let a boy grasp around under my bra, but, dammit, it felt so right. Boobs aren't treated the same anymore. They're now merely passageway to bigger, wetter things.

Believe me when I say that second is the best base of them all. Once you go beyond that, things tend to get slimy. Maybe I had great parents (or maybe terrible parents, I'm not sure) but all that STI stuff still freaks me out. If you're too drunk to inspect for



inflammation, don't bother touching it at all. Or you could wake up with regret: the all-day extender to any hangover. So, does every girl looking for a one night stand actually just want to be felt up? Probably.

As I reached my friend's party, I notice that other girls are all about their breasts too. It's obvious from how much like a tramp every girl looks. Maybe they're just like me; bored with the pseudo-intellectual dribble and just looking to get their tits touched. It seems people tend to forget how great breasts are. Wearing tight or low-cut shirts seem like a friendly way to remind people.

If you want a good tip, ladies, here's one: never wear front-hook bras. Firstly, it never does the bosom justice. Secondly, drunk boys just don't know how to unhook them. They're not looking in the front, they're feeling around back. When they're trying to impress you with the one-handed snap, the front clasp is an unexpected curve-ball. We've already got things pretty difficult - let's not make it worse.



s you sit there inhaling deeply, not for lack of breath but to feel the sweet, sharp ether of December cool your smoldering lungs, the corners of my mouth creep heavily upward. Dragon-plumes of vapor and smoke escape from the recesses of your chest and blend periwinkle-pale against the royal or navy or deep blue of winter/night; it's hard to tell which is which or what smells so achingly saccharine.

We head inside, leaving behind cashed-out roaches and lives that, for but a brief few moments, fade into the oblivion of the crisp infinite blackness overhead engulfing all of creation.

Through doorjambs and sliding metal slabs we ascend to the safety of our den as the hearth that is my full gut reheats my body from the inside out, unlike all the microwavewarmed Chinese food of yester-week we'd consumed on so many other nights just like this, painfully hot on the surface and tepid in its depths. Your skin is still cold to the touch.

The soft thud of rubber-soled shoes dropping from twitchy hands bounces off the walls, painted sienna in the dim radiance of compact fluorescence. Autumn-chromed and lightly saturated in the glowing hum of cheap, efficient Swedish ingenuity, you chime xylophone bright and beautiful when little this-and-thats engage your fancy. Among the choral reprises of "dude-I'm-high" and "let's get pizza", your voice rings clear through the noise, beckoning me towards you with the sort of hushed, humbling wonderment that only communion with the very fabric of the universe affords.

I lean in close, the whistle of air rushing through your nostrils and into your trachea punctuating the blast of noise and wind back outward, ready to hang onto your every word; ready to roll them across my pallet, to let my mouth feel the shape of each syllable smooth and round and fluid into the next, every phoneme flowing like a babbling brook of hard ks and glottal stops over my lips and out into the din of the room. But I refocus, untangling myself from the textures, sounds, and scents of what you're saying, and attend to the meaning.

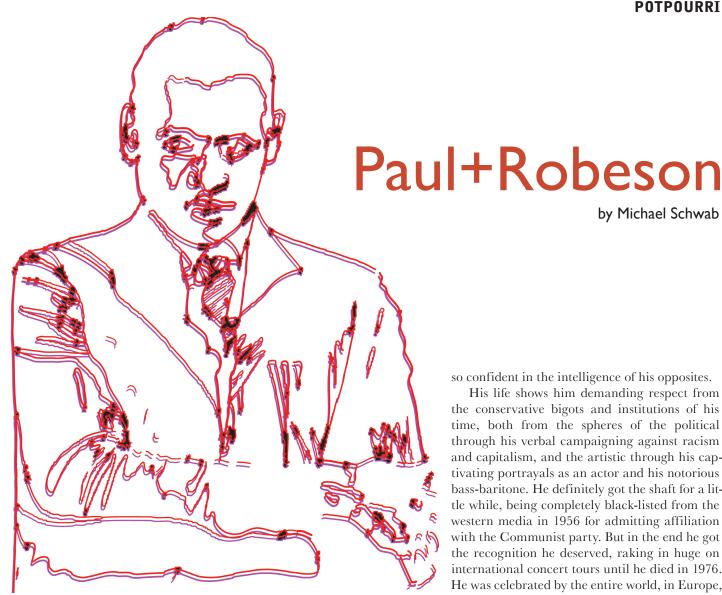
The look on your face is restrained elation. Through the music and the laughter and the smokescreen clouding my consciousness, I can't begin to tell what you're talking about, but the way your lips purse and your eyebrows raise into faint creases in your forehead is enthralling, so I agree, I think.

At long last, there is silence; silence with the exception of your well-enunciated words, directed towards your lap in between half smiles and embarrassed, self-conscious laughs. There is nothing left but your words.

"So, like, if you really take an objective look at the situation, dogs are like little monsters that just live in your house."

I laugh and lean in to kiss your cheek, the heat of our over-warm thighs radiating through the couch and making obvious the coolness of the rest of the room. I fall back into place, the corners of my mouth once again creeping upward. Because you're right. Dogs really are like little monsters that just live in your house.

by Michael Schwab



so confident in the intelligence of his opposites.

His life shows him demanding respect from the conservative bigots and institutions of his time, both from the spheres of the political through his verbal campaigning against racism and capitalism, and the artistic through his captivating portrayals as an actor and his notorious bass-baritone. He definitely got the shaft for a little while, being completely black-listed from the western media in 1956 for admitting affiliation with the Communist party. But in the end he got the recognition he deserved, raking in huge on international concert tours until he died in 1976. He was celebrated by the entire world, in Europe, the U.S., Asia and Australia.

It's hard to say what it is about him that I like so much. His songs and his voice are legit, but I'm in no hurry to listen to any other show-tune singing bass-baritones from the 1920's. It's cool that he was such a prominent actor, but you don't see me obsessing about Ira Aldridge, and he played Othello against an all-white cast a hundred years before Robeson. His apparently-legendary football career makes him seem like a superman, which is kind of annoying, and the Rutgers connection is just corny to me. It's strange, then, my dedicated appreciation of him.

I think what it literally comes down to is his picture being in the top eight on my last.fm. Seeing him next to Ween and Radiohead on my profile page makes me feel like I'm living in two worlds, or transcending history or something. And there's that picture of him. I've formed a close relationship with its grace and sincere appeal for acknowledgment. Its being has elevated from his biography for me. I'm convinced he's quietly beckoning for understanding from the entire cosmos. Then he's going to turn to me and say thank you for the good faith.

ately, I've been thinking a lot about Paul Robeson and how much of a boss he was. Reading the intro paragraph to his Wikipedia page is like taking rapid-fire punches of ability to the face. They just fire 'em off like bombs. Concert singer, recording artist, athlete, actor, activist, a son of an escaped slave and, later, an exiled reactionary. Supremely cool shit. He graduated from Rutgers in 1919 and was valedictorian, which is pretty cool, even though he was a football-playing frat boy. I even downloaded this 200-song torrent of his discography and some of the songs really touched my spot. Ol' Man River? Fuckin' Joe Hill? Psyched on it.

Now I'm bringing him up in conversations with people and I have 56 plays of him on my last.fm profile, second only to Sun City Girls in the last three months. It's a huge deal. His last.fm icon is sick, too. He's this austere guy with this big, black frame in a corduroy suit, arms crossed and hands resting on his elbows. He's looking to his right, just kind of patiently waiting for something he knows he deserves. He looks patient and composed, but kind of forlorn, like he's not

